

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Milton Historic District

and/or common N/A

## 2. Location

Bounded roughly by the west branch of the Susquehanna River,  
street & number Walnut St., Spruce Ave., Center St., High St. & Apple N/A not for publication  
St.

city, town Milton N/A vicinity of

state Pennsylvania code 042 county Northumberland code 097

## 3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name Multiple

street &amp; number N/A

city, town N/A N/A vicinity of state N/A

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Northumberland County Courthouse

street &amp; number Market &amp; Second

city, town Sunbury state Pennsylvania

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Northumberland Cty. Hist. Site Survey has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ nodate June, 1977 ☐ federal ☐ state ☒ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Northumberland County Courthouse

city, town Sunbury state Pennsylvania

# 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
— excellent	— deteriorated	— unaltered	— <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	— ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	— moved date <u>N/A</u>
— fair	— unexposed		

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Milton is located on the West Branch of the Susquehanna River eleven miles north of the Borough of Northumberland. Hills rise behind the downtown, but the majority of the historic district is in the floodplain. Elevation ranges from 463 feet to over 520 feet; Limestone Run flows through the lower town. The town's main thoroughfare is Front Street which parallels the river; Broadway is the other axis of the roughly T-shaped district. Milton has a grid but it is somewhat irregular due to the curve of the river and the inland hills. Milton's rise as a heavy industrial town after the advent of railroad transportation in the 1850's represents its greatest period of significance; this industrial influence has continued into the 20th Century.

Milton's architectural stock reflects the wealth of industrial families, since much of the district's early stock was lost in the great fire of 1880 or razed for urban renewal after the floods of 1972 and 1976. A pair of lovely stone Federal houses have fortunately survived, but the Greek Revival influence that must have accompanied the West Branch Canal in the late 1820's has been lost, as have many of the Gothic Revival, Italianate, and Second Empire residential buildings that would have followed. The district contains a wealth of late 19th Century houses in the Richardsonian Romanesque, Queen Anne, Shingle, and early Colonial Revival styles. Commercial buildings of the post-fire era are largely Italianate with a large number of later Neo-Classical types mixed in. Significant buildings of the 20th century include some fine Craftsman style bungalows along with later Colonial Revival types. The Art Deco U.S. Post Office closes the range of distinct styles. The proposed Milton Historic District contains some 754 buildings of which 42 are significant, 677 contributing, and 35 intrusions.

The curving riverbank defines the western edge of Milton. North of the town building density drops sharply; outside the district's southern boundary, large industrial buildings form a wall which defines the edge of the lower town. The east and southeast areas have residential development extending beyond the Borough limits, although the line of hills which rise quickly behind the former Pennsylvania Railroad tracks separates the later residential neighborhoods from the downtown. Limestone Run's floodplain between Race and Center streets is largely vacant due to flooding; the mostly undeveloped urban renewal area from Filbert Street to the river also centers on Limestone Run.

Milton's irregular grid has several distinct orientations. The upper town's grid is related to Front Street and is regular down to Broadway. Broadway meets Front at an angle slightly less than 90 degrees. Although the town has no distinct center, the open space of Lincoln Park at the Front and Broadway intersection serves as a focal point.

The streets south of Broadway and east of the railroad tracks are laid out in relation to Broadway while the two grids south of Broadway near the river are parallel to the river bank. The oldest parts of town are the area extending from Locust Street to Ferry Lane and are the most irregular.

Milton started as two distinct towns. Lower Milton was below Broadway, laid out by miller Andrew Straub in 1793; Upper Milton was the creation of Joseph Black in 1795 and extended from Broadway to Locust. The town stretched along the riverbank in the floodplain and each part centered on its respective market street. When Center Street was built in 1860, only the thin line of commercial buildings and residences on Front Street connected the Upper and Lower towns. The intervening area, especially along Limestone Run, was the scene of the smallish industrial activities of the pre-railroad era. After the Civil War, Milton's manufacturing renaissance began, stretching to the north beyond Locust; Broadway and Center streets carried a new thrust to the east. The commercial area extended along Broadway to the railroad tracks with a mixed commercial/residential neighborhood to the south between Arch Street and the river.

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The disastrous fire in 1880 destroyed 665 buildings and some \$2 million worth of property and gutted the heart of Milton's downtown from Locust Street south to Mahoning Street. A few isolated houses were spared.

Land use continued as before; the rebuilt commercial section was on Broadway, Front Street, and Bound Avenue south of Broadway with residential areas to the north of Broadway. The Limestone Run area remained the site of smaller industries; due to their size, the large factories were located on the fringes of the town, both south of Ferry Lane and east of Arch Street north of Locust.

North Front Street and Broadway hill became the fashionable addresses for the wealthy. More modest houses were built along Arch/Lincoln, in the Hepburn/Center area and in the lower town. Generally, middle-class housing and commercial buildings were built on the sidewalk, although later blocks leave room for elaborate porches; the wealthy preferred dwellings with more extensive lawns as the century advanced, although some of the most elaborate mansions on the west side of Front Street were placed on the sidewalk due to the encroaching river at their backs. Similarly, some large houses on the south side of Broadway were located on the sidewalk due to radically sloping plots.

Early 20th Century development opened a new neighborhood on the Vine Street hill, while post World War I building was located along North Front and beyond Prospect Avenue in the Hepburn/Center neighborhood. The twin disasters of Hurricane Agnes in 1972 and the flood of 1977 led to the demolition of 400 buildings, primarily along Arch Street between Mahoning and Broadway, creating a new neighborhood of recent buildings and empty lots.

The buildings of Milton reflect the construction methods of their respective eras. The early stone Federal houses are matched by two log houses that are their Vernacular cousins. Brick soon superceded stone and frame replaced log in buildings finished before the great fire. In the Victorian boom years, stone, frame and brick buildings were constructed. Generally, the larger Victorian houses were brick or brick veneer while the arts of the carpenter were lavished on the smaller houses.

Middle class and working class residential neighborhoods are primarily frame. Many of these more modest houses have unusually fine porch detailing; the preservation of these porches is an indication of the pride that Milton's residents take in their homes. The neighborhood around Center and Hepburn streets is a middle class residential neighborhood while the two identical lines of small company row houses on Carr Avenue and Upper Market Street represent a typical working class neighborhood.

Although the district as a whole has a mix of various types of construction, commercial buildings are predominantly masonry or masonry veneer.

Some four-story buildings are present among Milton's commercial buildings, but the general scale of the downtown is 2 to 3 stories. While some stores are residential scale structures, most commercial buildings are larger, featuring first floor storefronts and apartments or storage above. Residential types range from modestly sized 2½ story row-houses to large Victorian mansions. Later residences are consistently 1½ to 2½ stories.

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The Milton Historic District contains few industrial buildings. Several smaller industrial buildings are included within the district's boundary including the large former Shimer Corporation works (now Continental Can) on Race Street, but most of the heavy industry of the late 19th Century is located to the south of town. American Car and Foundry, (formerly the Milton Car Works) is located parallel to the Front/Arch Street corridor in the northern part of the district, but is not included due to extensive modern alterations.

Most of the buildings in the district are residential or commercial. The two Federal houses (355 S. Front, 37 W. 4th) which represent Milton's early stylish architecture are located at opposite ends of the district. Both display fine stone work and graceful entrances with fanlights and pediments supported by flanking pilasters. The one at 355 S. Front was built by Peter Swartz for John Herthington in 1804 and was the third stone house in Milton.

Milton's best Gothic Revival buildings are the various churches. The brick Episcopal church on Upper Market dates from 1849 and is the only pre-fire church that survives. A simple structure, it is dwarfed by such later edifices as the Methodist Episcopal Church (1882, 107 S. Front) and the First Presbyterian Church (1882, Joseph Nesbit, architect) on Walnut Street. Both of these buildings feature exceptionally fine steeples along with polychrome stonework. The Catholic Church on Broadway is another example of the Gothic Revival executed in brick. Residential Gothic Revival is represented by a stylized brick house at 703-705 Broadway and a fanciful frame cottage at 67 Filbert Street that is packed with detailing such as carved hood moldings and an elaborate porch.

High style Italianate is best represented by attorney and banker J. Woods Brown's house at 500 N. Front Street. This brick house displays the cupola, boxy form and broad bracketed eaves characteristic of the style; it dates from the mid 1850's. A number of Italianate/Gothic amalgams are extant that date from the great rebuilding of the early 1880's. Industrialist Samuel W. Murray's brick house on the northeast corner of Front and Upper Market combines brackets and hood moldings with steep intersecting gables and lancet attic windows. Coal merchant Edward Johnson's double house at 419-421 Front utilizes similar detailing and has a particularly fine porch.

Most of Milton's original Second Empire buildings were lost in the 1880 fire and the style failed to regain great popularity. The frame sidehall house at 700 N. Front is the finest remaining example; it is narrow but deep, taking advantage of a side street that exposes its flank. The building is sided with wood cut to mimic ashlar and has an embellished porch.

The various Queen Anne houses of Milton represent the heart of the district's residential stock. All four principal sub-types identified in McAlester's Field Guide to American Houses are present, including the comparatively rare patterned masonry variation. The scale of the Queen Anne houses range from full-blown mansions to small houses on narrow lots that are nonetheless densely detailed.

- \* The McAlesters define their categories in this fashion:  
spindled sub-type uses extensive turned wood embellishment; free classic types utilize Classical columns in conjunction with other Classical detailing; half timbered uses false half-timbering and is related to Tudor Revival; patterned masonry uses patterned brickwork and stone trim along with shaped and parapeted eaves.

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The most exceptional of the patterned masonry Queen Anne houses is industrialist Charles Godcharles' house, (Hotel Milton) at 101 N. Front Street. This brick patterned-masonry type abounds with stone detailing and textured brick-work. The shaped attic gables have cut stone parapets and the attic story of the corner tower is adorned with carved stone gargoyles; the drains for the first floor porch likewise have a carved animal-head motif. The house is located on a corner lot, exposing its side facade. The eccentric massing and rich texture of this fine house make it a visual bonanza. Industrialist George Shimer's house at 216 N. Front also uses the shaped-stone parapet coupled with a massive stone parapeted porch with terra cotta Ionic columns and stone window surrounds. The former Elk's Home (50 Broadway) is another excellent example with a particularly ornate roofline with stone-topped eaves in fanciful shapes; unfortunately, this building has been severely altered at street level.

Of the various spindle Queen Anne houses, the brick house of manufacturer Samuel Shimer is the best large scale example, although the frame D.G. Marsh house at 205 Broadway is a rival. The Shimer house (228 N. Front) displays the typically varied attic massing of the Queen Anne style, along with a characteristic engaged tower that starts at second-floor level and a recessed attic porch. The neighboring Elmer Shimer house (246 N. Front) is a smaller, less ornate example. The Marsh House, which incorporates an earlier log dwelling, has a full complement of finely carpentered textural devices. All three of these houses have lost their original porches.

Free classic Queen Anne has a large contingent; none of these houses is of mansion scale. The brick houses of factory owner Reuben Wilson (28 N. Front), Attorney Edmund Davis (259 Broadway) and restaurateur Edgar Summers (131 Broadway) are all fairly narrow and share a common cylindrical corner tower. The Wilson house also has its original porch with stone parapet and stone Tuscan columns. Later houses built for Shimer Corporation executive William H. Beck (c1900, 201 Turbot) and George Chapin (c1900, 50 N. Front) incorporate some influence from later styles. The Chapin house, though sided with clapboards and shingles, adds the symmetry and detailing of the Colonial Revival style; the Beck house is likewise largely shingled, but its form is that of the hip-roofed Foursquare house and it has Craftsman style exposed rafters.

The half-timbered variant is least common in the Milton district and the main example has lost its original porch. John Buoy's brick house at 400 N. Front Street maintains all of its fine attic detailing, including tiny windowless gables around the chimneys.

In addition to the profusion of Queen Anne, Milton has two fine examples of the succeeding Shingle style. The better of the two is the Dr. J.S. Follmer house at 635 Broadway. This late example was built in 1904 and is located on an expansive lot; the characteristic organic shape of the Shingle house is embellished with Colonial Revival garlanded panels and a stylized Palladian window. American Car and Foundry executive B. Budd Cannon's house at 225 Turbott Avenue (c1900) incorporates some Queen Anne influence and an uncharacteristic slate roof, but its side-gambrel roof and curved windows mark it as a true Shingle house.

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Another unusual house is the Enterline Flower Shop at 65 Broadway. Though constructed of brick, its windows and attic detailing mark it as a Stick style structure. The H.A. Fonda house (c1895, 60 Walnut) is a similarly lone example of the residential Richardsonian Romanesque. This house's massive rough-hewn stone walls with polychrome belt courses and window surrounds support a tall hipped roof, whose original terra cotta tiles have recently been replaced. Four round corner towers retain their tiles; along with massive chimneys they enhance the weightiness of this mansion scale house. A companion carriage house has also survived.

Milton's industrial prosperity continued into the 20th century, providing the town with a wealth of the revival style houses then in vogue. An early Colonial Revival example is the Margaret Hull house at 213 N. Front. Owned by the sister of coal, grain, and lumber merchant William Hull and built around 1890, this frame house is an unusually correct centerhall type. Colonial Revival houses dating from the early 20th century tend to be relatively simple Foursquare hipped-roof types with minimal detailing. In the late twenties extremely authentic Colonial Revival houses appeared; the brick example at 240 Broadway has belt courses and a hipped roof and the house at 250 Broadway (1927) couples rough-hewn stonework with an unusually delicate pilastered entrance with elliptical fanlight.

The Neo-Classical Revival also has its representatives. Industrialist William Godcharles' brick house (c1905, 400 N. Front) features a typically ornate porch, and window heads and cornices have strong mutules; the attics dormer have pedimented tops and round-topped windows. Unfortunately, the original fluted porch columns with their composite capitals and heavy accompanying balustrade have just been replaced. The even larger New-Classical Hastings mansion at 541 Broadway was built in 1931. It has a hipped roof, two-story elliptical porch with monumental columns and is light-colored stone with dark stone accents; a large lot adds to this house's impressiveness.

Tudor and Dutch Colonial Revival types include an early Tudor Revival house at 940 Front Street, built in 1895. Though modest in size, this building's false half-timbering and symmetrical attic dormers make a charming appearance. The best Dutch Colonial house is at 425 Broadway. The main mass of this building is fairly normal with its gambrel roof and second floor dormers, but a wing on the left features a stepped gable and is unusually accurate in form.

Later houses of note include Craftsman style bungaloid houses at 1015 Front and 223 Vine. The Front Street house is dominated by a massive cobblestone porch with elliptical arches; wall surfaces are stucco and exposed rafters and a bellcast roof add to its appeal. The frame Vine Street house is clapboard and shingle with a side gabled roof, ornate stickwork porch detailing an upper balcony and integral full-width porch.

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Milton's older remaining commercial buildings are Italianate types of various sizes. The earliest are essentially brick houses with down-stairs storefronts. Their main embellishment consists of arched windows with brick hood moldings and corbeled embellishments at cornice level. A row of these is located at 68-108 South Front Street. Later commercial buildings have taller ceilings and higher profiles with generally sloping shed roofs. Buildings like 33 S. Front Street have more elaborate carved wood cornices and taller round topped windows than early examples.

Other commercial buildings of a slightly later date, like the Sears Roebuck Building, 53 S. Front Street have heavily embellished pressed metal cornices with a great deal of surface detailing. A particularly fine commercial building is the former Dreifuss Brothers Store at 45 S. Front Street which combines aspects of the Gothic Revival like cross gables and pointed top windows with an Italianate cornice and hood moldings.

Both of the large remaining hotels, the former Broadway house (now the YMCA) and the Stetler Hotel at Broadway and Arch are also Italianate in style. The Broadway house features a corbeled brick arcade effect at cornice level and brick hood moldings above the windows while the Stetler House has a more conventional wooden cornice with brackets.

A lone example of Queen Anne commercial architecture is the Milton Water Company Building (1890), 113-114 S. Front Street. It features the typical elaborate wall texture of the Queen Anne Style in its shingled attic gable, while the main facade is brick. It also retains its original ground floor storefronts with their bracketed cornices.

Later commercial buildings are generally Neo-Classical, although some retain Italianate features even into the 20th Century. An unusual and finely detailed early example is the former Gauger and Sons store at 36 S. Front Street. It's stucco facade has five engaged pilasters below a very elaborate pressed metal cornice; the ground floor storefronts retain their cast iron Corinthian columns.

Later Neo-Classical buildings from the early 20th Century include the Milton National Bank, (now the Public Library) on S. Front which has a white marble facade with large compound arch flanked by single Tuscan columns. It's interior is particularly well preserved.

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The 1930 Masonic Temple at 115 N. Front Street represents a later variety of Neo-Classical styling. It's monumental facade is wedded to an otherwise simple brick building. The large stone pediment and two-story stone Ionic supporting columns rest on a stone-faced raised base-ment. Extensive carving and broad steps complete the Classical effect.

The last gem of Milton commercial architecture is the Art-Deco Post Office. Its facade is covered with brick and orange-colored sandstone. A projecting half-round turret to the left contains the main entrance; the facade is topped with bas-relief carvings and the area above the entrance is embellished with a copper and brass panel depicting the Susquehanna River and the American Eagle. The street stairs are flanked by massive quarter-round stone blocks, completing the treatment of this most unusual Post Office.

Of the several industrial buildings included within the District boundary, the most interesting architecturally is the former Shimer Corporation works on Race Street. The earliest block of this building is an example of industrial Queen Anne done in brick with extensive corbeled decoration. Unfortunately, the rear wing of this long building was covered with aluminum several years ago.

Other industrial buildings like the Reid Tobacco Company on Rose Street and the former Milton Wood Products building at Arch and Walnut are also brick but have more Utilitarian styling.

While Milton retains the mood of its turn-of-the-century heyday quite well, insensitive renovation has taken its toll especially among downtown commercial buildings. While the upper stories of commercial buildings are generally original, the storefronts have been altered several times in some cases. The residential intrusions are generally ranch houses or late Colonial Revival houses while the most common commercial intrusion is the former gas station, often converted to a convenience store. The usual rash of aluminum siding is present in many residential areas but much of the ornate front porch detailing has been retained even on houses that have otherwise been altered detrimentally.



# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1800-1935 Builder/Architect various

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Architecture, Commerce, Industry, Politics/Government

The Milton Historic District is composed of the downtown and older residential neighborhoods of this 19th and 20th Century industrial center. The building stock maintains a high degree of integrity and reflects the drive and wealth of the citizens who rebuilt Milton after the disastrous fire in 1880 that destroyed most of the downtown. Transportation has always played an important role in the town's growth, first in the form of river rafts; the coming of the Pennsylvania Canal in 1830 made Milton the only large town in northern Northumberland County during the first half of the 19th Century. Two major railroad systems connected Milton with the outside world in the 1850's. The canal and the railroad provided the impetus for commercial and industrial activities that added to Milton's status as the chief town in northern Northumberland County. Architecturally the District contains the best collection of late Victorian and early 20th Century residential and commercial buildings in the lower West Branch Valley. Among Milton's later buildings are excellent examples of such World War I styles as Craftsman and Art Deco.

In 1772 Marcus Huling built the first house in what would become Milton. He chose a spot near Limestone Run for this log tavern, while his son built a blacksmith shop further north. When millwright Andrew Straub came to the site in 1779, he found that the earlier buildings had been burned by British-paid Indians. Straub eventually built a mill on the big island and acquired the land that would be Lower Milton from the estate of Turbot Francis in 1790; he laid out streets in 1792. His neighbor Joseph Black established Upper Milton in 1795.

The presence of the 1787 road from Northumberland to Lycoming Creek and the ease of access to river traffic made Milton an early commercial center for the surrounding agricultural area. By 1805 a post office had been established; industries included a tannery, a carding mill, flour mill and five distilleries. Seven hotels accommodated travelers. Milton was incorporated in 1817 as the second Borough in Northumberland County. The county's first bank was also located in the town in 1814;

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the Northumberland Union and Columbia Bank failed three years later. Although Milton was by far the major town in northern Northumberland County at this point, its importance was greatly overshadowed by Northumberland which had over one hundred houses by the turn of the century and Sunbury, the County seat.

On November 25, 1830, the first boat from Northumberland arrived in the "Port of Milton" on the West Branch Canal, affording efficient transportation of goods. Milton's industrial and commercial expansion continued and canal boat builders and canalers located in the town. Milton was probably the most important canal port on the West Branch, but its significance as a canal center within the County is second to Northumberland where the North Branch and West Branch canals met.

Joseph Rhoads built the first iron foundry on the West Branch in 1830 and large grain milling operations were founded soon after. By 1850 there were two more foundries and the West Branch's first steam sawmill; population had grown from 508 in 1840 to 1,649. The railroad came to the town in 1852 when a connection with Catawissa was completed. In 1855 Sunbury and Williamsport lines were finished and communication by rail with Harrisburg followed in 1858. Milton's railroad connection made it the industrial and commercial center of northern Northumberland County but was not as extensive as the six railroad connections enjoyed by Sunbury or the huge freight yard established later at Northumberland. Two of Milton's four railroad stations survive and have been preserved. The former Philadelphia and Reading Freight Station is used as the Borough Office while the former Philadelphia and Erie passenger station is now used by the Police Department. Both are located on Filbert near Broadway. New industries in the 50's included a planing mill, a carriage works, and the R. F. Wilson Fly-Net Factory. Population rose to 1,702 in 1860.

This early industrial era in Milton produced the town's most significant political figure, Governor James Pollock. Born in Milton in 1810, Pollock was elected to Congress in 1844 to finish the term of Milton newspaperman General Henry Frick. Pollock served in three Congresses and roomed with Abraham Lincoln; he resigned from the House and returned to Milton as judge of the 8th District in 1851. Three years later Pollock defeated Governor William Bigler, but served only one term and declined renomination. He was a founder of the Milton Savings Bank and in 1861 was tapped by Lincoln as director of the U. S. Mint. Pollock died at Lock Haven in 1890.

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The year 1864 saw the establishment of truly heavy industry in the form of the Milton Car Works, which, by the 1890's, employed 650 workers. The firm was owned by Samuel Murray (201 N. Front) and William Dougal (343 N. Front), grandson of Milton's pioneer doctor and a veteran of the Battle of Gettysburg. Railroad cars (including the first oil tank cars), iron bridges, and boilers were the products of this works, which are still in use by the AC&F company. In 1872 the Milton Iron Company and the first Shimer ventures joined the expansion. Samuel J. Shimer (228 N. Front) was a partner with his brother George in the lumber business. Moving into milling and planing, Shimer invented a cutting head and, after the loss of his lumber works in the 1880 fire, began manufacturing it. He also invented a washer cutting machine in 1889 that was used by the Milton Manufacturing Company, which the Shimers acquired in 1888. Elmer S. Shimer (246 N. Front) and George S. Shimer (216 N. Front) were Samuel's sons and successors in the management of the operations which employed some 800 workers. The Shimer Corporation factory on Race Street is still extant.

The firm of Charles A. Godcharles (101 N. Front) had its start in 1874 when the founder established a nail mill in Milton. His sons William (401 N. Front), Walter, and Frederick joined in the firm, which employed as many as 400 workers. Other manufacturers included cigar works (Reid Tobacco Company, Rose Street), knitting operations, and brickyards. Although the Great Fire of 1880 began in the Milton Car Works only a portion of this factory was burned. Other manufacturing businesses were also lost to the flames but the main industrial district south of Ferry Lane was unaffected. These surviving factories along with the considerable financial resources of the industrial families fueled the rebuilding of Milton that occurred in the 1880's and early 1890's.

Milton's manufacturing concerns rivaled those of nearby Danville and Sunbury in size and number and made Milton the industrial center of the Lower West Branch Valley.

Commercial expansion matched this industrial growth. Large hotels like the Broadway House (now the YMCA), the Stetler Hotel (Broadway and Arch), and the now-demolished Haag Hotel were built to accommodate both vacationers and commercial travelers. Two banks--the Milton National (17 S. Front) and the First National (14 S. Front)--were founded by 1864; a third, the Milton Trust Bank (51 S. Front), was organized in 1887. Stores like the Dreifuss Brothers (45 S. Front) served a wide area as Milton became a regional shopping center. "The stores and hotels of Milton at the present time are a most conclusive evidence of

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the enterprise and prosperity of the town. Every line of business is well represented and many of the stores are among the largest in their respective lines in this part of the State." (Bell, 1891, page 556). Ventures like the Milton Water Company (113-114 S. Front, 1890) and the Milton Gas Company aided the building boom that followed the fire.

Milton's still extant commercial buildings reflect this importance. They are more numerous than Watsontown's or Northumberland's commercial buildings. They rival Sunbury as the chief commercial center of the river end of Northumberland County.

The Milton Historic District is architecturally significant thanks to a fine collection of late Victorian and turn-of-the-century buildings--commercial, residential, and religious. The loss of much of Milton's early stock to fire and flood has made the district's buildings more homogenous in era than most towns. Consistency of period is particularly strong in the Queen Anne style and its most popular successor the Colonial Revival. More eccentric styles such as Shingle, Romanesque, Craftsman, and Art Deco have their isolated fine buildings, while the Italianate and Neo-Classical styles dominate the commercial district.

The two excellent stone Federal houses stand in isolated grandeur as most of their peers are gone; the only similarly old buildings still extant are plain, verging on folk houses. From historical sources it is apparent that stone was the chosen material for stylish houses in the earliest days. Mason Peter Swartz built several well-remembered stone houses including the Herthington House at 355 S. Front and Governor Pollock's house, lost in the 1880 fire. Like Williamsport, Milton has lost the pre-Civil War flavor that marks neighboring towns like Lewisburg and Muncy. The fire and the ballooning industrial expansion combined to leave Milton with a consistently later appearance.

It is the architecture of the post-fire era (1880-1930) which defines present-day Milton. The amazing wealth of the town is exemplified by the rows of houses and commercial buildings that almost immediately replaced the 665 buildings lost to the flames which originated in the Milton Car Works framing shop near Locust and swept south to Mahoning Street. The richest part of Milton's building stock is a collection of various Queen Anne houses that is remarkable for such a small town. The best specimens of this style would stand out anywhere, especially the fanciful and richly detailed Charles Godcharles House at 101 N. Front Street. The residential Richardsonian Romanesque style of the H.A. Fonda House is very rare in the area, as is the pure Shingle style, exemplified by the Follmer House (635 Broadway).

In the commercial buildings, elaborations of the Italianate represent the first post-fire buildings. While the early examples are simple house-sized structures by the 1890's ornate pressed metal cornices on larger buildings predominate. Some, like the building at 35 S. Front Street, achieve a complexity of detail that marks them as Neo-Classical, a style that would dominate the downtown during the early 20th century. Generally, Milton's Italianate buildings are larger than those in nearby Watsontown while the Neo-Classical types, especially banks, are by far the largest collection in the northern end of the county.

Houses after 1900 are generally related to the Colonial Revival style, although the Classical Revival is represented. Milton Colonial Revival ranges from very early examples with Queen Anne elements to finely detailed houses from the 1920's and 30's that are accurate recreations of Georgian and Federal houses. While both the Colonial Revival and Classical Revival styles are relatively common in the area, Milton's examples stand out because of their size and fine detailing.

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The Art Deco-Post Office is one of the finest of its style in the region and the district also contains a number of Craftsman style buildings, including a very large bungalow with cobblestone porch, which rank with the best local examples of the style.

Despite some losses, the Milton Historic District represents a significant and distinguishable industrial town of the late 19th and early 20th century. The similarity of age of most of its important buildings add to the architectural cohesiveness of the district. The percentage of intrusions is less than five percent although such intrusive practices as aluminum siding and the replacement of slate roofs with asphalt shingle have caused some loss of integrity. The Milton District was most significant between the years 1800 and 1935.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Attached Sheet

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 100.95

Quadrangle name Milton

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	8	3	4	4	1	5	0	4	5	4	3	7	4	0
Zone			Easting			Northing								

C 

1	8	3	4	5	1	6	0	4	5	4	2	5	2	0
Zone			Easting			Northing								

E 

1	8	3	4	4	0	1	0	4	5	4	2	3	6	0
Zone			Easting			Northing								

G 

1	8	3	4	4	1	5	0	4	5	4	2	0	0	0
Zone			Easting			Northing								

B 

1	8	3	4	4	3	8	0	4	5	4	3	6	4	0
Zone			Easting			Northing								

D 

1	8	3	4	4	6	9	0	4	5	4	1	8	2	0
Zone			Easting			Northing								

F 

1	8	3	4	4	1	5	0	4	5	4	2	0	0	0
Zone			Easting			Northing								

H 

Zone			Easting			Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Douglas R. McMinn

organization Thomas R. Deans Assoc.

date March, 1986

street & number 311 N. Front St.

telephone (717) 742-9323

city or town Milton, PA 17847

state PA

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer

date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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## Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

Beginning at the southwest corner of River Alley and Eighth Street proceed west approximately 375 feet to the rear property line of plot 1-1-260; proceed approximately 1,160 feet south along the western edge of unnamed alley to the southern curb of Fifth Street; proceed west along the line of this curb approximately 800 feet to the east bank of the West Branch; turn south southeast and proceed approximately 6,280 feet along the east bank to a point opposite the northern curb of Apple Street; turning southeast proceed approximately 535 feet to the northern corner of the Apple/Garfield intersection; turning northeast proceed approximately 215 feet to the northern corner of the Garfield/Pine intersection; turning southeast, proceed approximately 455 feet to the northern corner of Cherry Street and Ferry Lane; turning northeast, proceed approximately 1,250 feet along the line of the northern curb of Cherry Street to meet Filbert Street; turning northwest, proceed approximately 100 feet to the southwest corner of the Race/Filbert intersection; turning west, proceed along the southern curb of Race Street approximately 500 feet to the southeast corner of the Race/Garfield intersection; turning south southwest, proceed approximately 370 feet to the eastern corner of Garfield/Mahoning intersection; turning southwest, proceed approximately 275 feet to the southern corner of the Garfield/Sugar Alley intersection; turning northwest, proceed approximately 510 feet to the western curb of South Front Street; turning northeast, and then north northeast proceed approximately 800 feet along the western curb of South Front to a point opposite the northern curb of unnamed alley; turning east, proceed approximately 220 feet to the northwest corner of the alley/Elm Street intersection; proceed northeast approximately 810 feet to a point opposite the northern curb of Cherry Alley; proceed east approximately 590 feet along the line of Cherry Alley's northern curb to a point on the rear property line of parcel 2-3-119; proceed approximately 610 feet southwest along the rear property line of parcels 2-3-119 through 2-3-131 arriving at the northern curb of Center Street; proceed east approximately 100 feet to a point opposite the eastern curb of Maple Avenue; proceed south approximately 215 feet to the northeast corner of the intersection of Maple and unnamed alley; proceed east approximately 950 feet along this northern curb to the eastern curb of Turbot Avenue; proceed approximately 400 feet south to a point opposite the southern curb of Race Street; proceed west approximately 490 feet to the southeastern corner of the Race/Ridge intersection; proceed south approximately 400 feet to the northeastern corner of the Ridge/High intersection; proceed east approximately 195 feet to a point opposite the western property line of parcel 2-4-23; proceed south approximately 160 feet to the rear property line of said parcel; proceed east approximately 610 feet along



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unnamed alley to the eastern property line of parcel 2-4-155; proceed approximately 500 feet north along the eastern property lines of parcels 2-4-155, 2-4-122, 2-4-113, 2-4-83 and then across Limestone Run to a point at the southeast corner of parcel 1-3-376; proceed east approximately 400 feet along the northern curb of an unnamed alley to the western curb of Prospect; proceed north approximately 190 feet to the northwest corner of the Prospect/Center intersection; proceed east approximately 265 feet to the eastern property line of parcel 1-3-338; proceed approximately 670 feet north along the property lines of parcels 1-3-338 and 1-3-233 and across Hepburn Street to the western curb of Hottenstein Street, stopping at the northwest corner of Hottenstein Street and unnamed alley; proceed east approximately 740 feet to the western curb of Poplar Street; proceed north approximately 200 feet to the northern curb of Broadway; proceed east approximately 100 feet to the eastern property line of parcel 2-2-181; proceed north approximately 250 feet to the southern curb of unnamed alley; proceed approximately 610 feet west to the western property line of 2-2-159; proceed approximately 30 feet north to a point opposite the southern edge of Carr Alley; proceed west approximately 1,915 feet to the western curb of Academy Avenue; proceed approximately 390 feet north to the southern curb of Upper Market Street; proceed approximately 390 feet west to the eastern property line of parcel 1-2-86; proceed north approximately 400 feet to the southern curb of Locust Street; proceed west approximately 390 feet to the western curb of Arch Street; proceed north approximately 1,985 feet along first Arch Street and the Lincoln Street to the northern property line of parcel 1-1-107; proceed approximately 130 feet west to the western edge of River Alley; proceed north approximately 1,865 feet to point of beginning.

Milton Boundary Justification

The northern and southern ends of the district were defined by increasing intrusions and lack of valuable resources north of Eighth Street and south of Apple Street. Along northern Lincoln Street an unusual amount of open space along with a lack of valuable resources caused us to place the boundary at the rear alley. Below Fifth Street a row of more significant houses was included with the boundary placed on Lincoln. To the east of Lincoln the large AC&F Works was excluded due to alterations and lack of architectural value. The mountainous block west of Academy Avenue and North of Upper Market contains no buildings and recent development north of Carr Alley to the east was also excluded. The boundary runs at the rear of the very large houses

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## Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

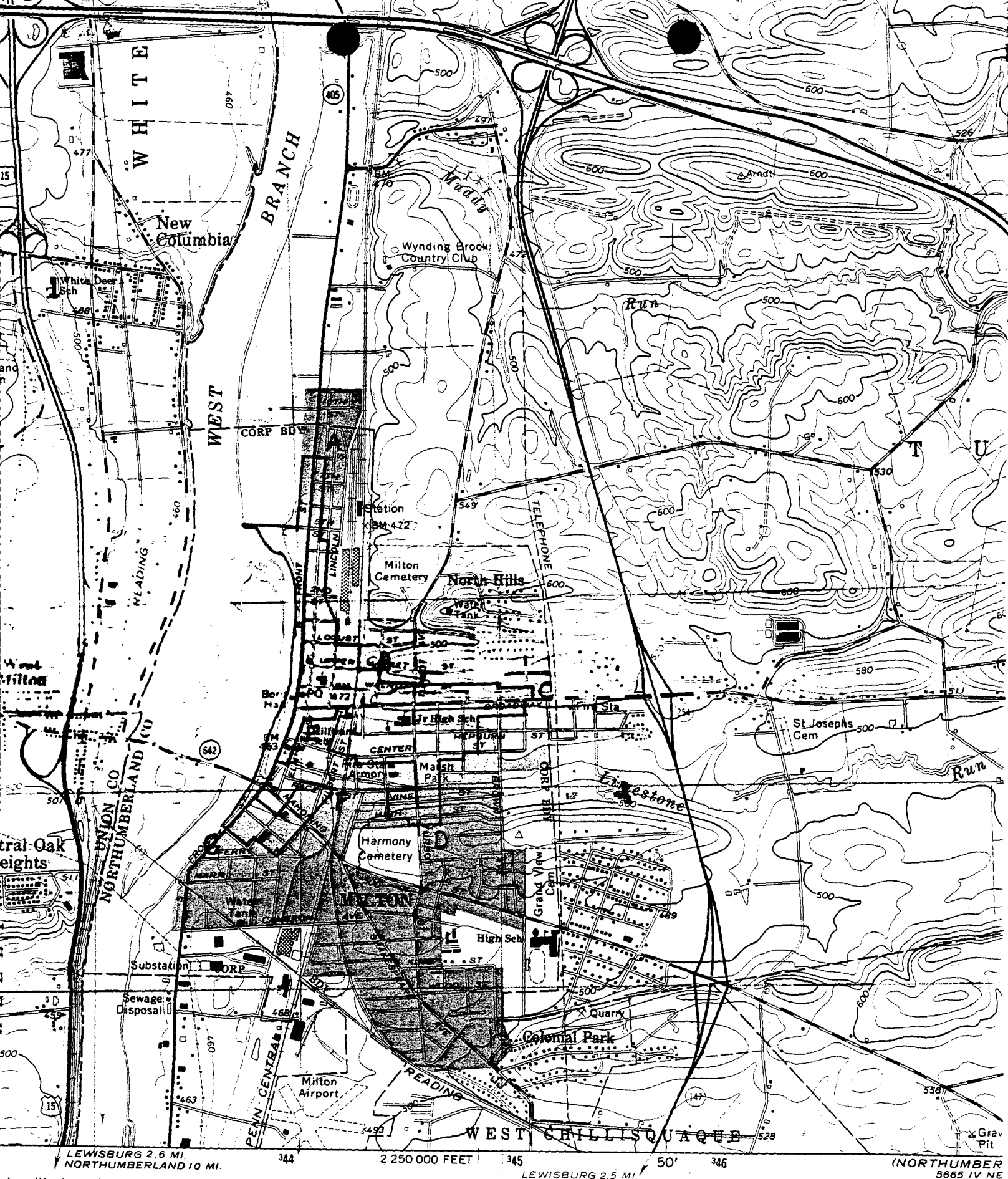
on the north side of the 500 block of Broadway; the far eastern boundary was chosen to include a large Gothic Revival house (703-705 Broadway) while excluding newer buildings present on the south side of Broadway beyond Poplar.

Due to proliferation of intrusions which begin midway between Prospect and Brown Street in the Hepburn/Center corridor, the boundary placed along the rear property line of earlier houses on the south side of Broadway. More valuable 20th century resources on Center and Hepburn beyond Prospect were included while intrusions further to the east are placed outside the boundary.

The line extending south from Stanton Avenue across Limestone Run to the Vine Street-High Street 20th Century neighborhood was found to include the maximum number of valuable resources to the east of Turbot in that hilly area. The entire Vine Street-High Street bulge was designed to exclude intrusions that are present both to the west and to the east along Vine and High, while south of High Street other intrusions and a large cemetery provide an easy demarcation. Along Limestone Run to the west of Turbot are large empty spaces coupled with several large intrusions; this lack of resources caused us to place the boundary along the rear property lines of houses on the south side of Center in the 100 and 200 blocks.

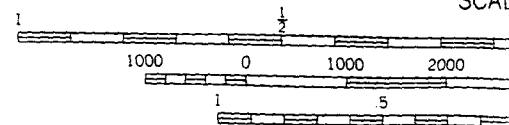
West of Filbert Street the large empty space of the urban renewal area, with a few scattered recent buildings, was also excluded from the district. The extreme southern end of the district in the Lower Market Street-Mahoning Street area was likewise designed to exclude intrusions and empty space south of Race Street, while including all the resources that were valuable on Mahoning and Lower Market. Beyond Cherry Street to the southeast are mostly open spaces and modern intrusions which were likewise excluded.

The West Branch forms a natural boundary for the western edge of the District, while the urban renewal area begins east of Front Street and Elm Street.



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by USGS and USC&GS

ography by photogrammetric methods from aerial  
graphs taken 1962-63. Field checked 1965  
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